

REMARKS

This Response is submitted in reply to the Final Office Action mailed on April 6, 2006. Claims 23-32 have been allowed. Claims 23, 26 and 27 have been amended. Claims 14-22 and 38-43 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. No new matter has been added by this response.

In the Final Office Action, the Patent Office states that claims 14-32 are directed to an invention that is distinct from the invention originally claimed because claims 14-22 are directed to an embodiment of the shaft having layers of different thicknesses. As stated in Applicant's previous response filed on January 30, 2006, the specification of the originally filed application supports the claimed invention defined by claims 14-22. Accordingly, Applicant disagrees with the Patent Office that claims 14-22 include new matter which should be filed in a continuation-in-part (CIP) application. Nevertheless, Applicant has cancelled claims 14-22 to place the application in condition for allowance. Applicant reserves the right to file cancelled claims 14-22 in one or more continuation applications.

Claim 23 is objected to because the term "non-structural" should be changed to the term "protective." Applicant has amended claim 23 to change the term as suggested by the Patent Office. Additionally, Applicant has amended claim 23 to remove other inconsistencies found in the claim. Applicant has also amended claims 26 and 27 to include terms which are consistent with claim 23 from which these claims depend. No new matter has been added to amended claims 23, 26 and 27.

Claims 38-43 are rejected under 35 U.S.C § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,241,633 to Conroy ("Conroy") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,155,932 to Cabales et

al. ("Cabales"). Applicant has cancelled claims 38-43. Accordingly, the rejection of claims 38-43 is now moot.

In light of the above, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 23-32 are patentable over the art of record because the cited art does not disclose, teach or suggest the subject matter of these claims. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that claims 23-32 be deemed allowable at this time and that a timely notice of allowance be issued in this case.

No fees are due. If any other fees are due in connection with this application, the Patent Office is authorized to deduct the fees from Deposit Account No. 19-1351. If such withdrawal is made, please indicate the attorney docket number (TJK/400) on the account statement.

Respectfully Submitted,


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CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

I hereby certify that this paper is being deposited with the United States Postal Service in an envelope addressed to the Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Date: 7/6/06


Irene Feizulov